

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7739

INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T AMMAN 2311

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON FROM PICKERING

EXDIS

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR MASS JO US SA

SUBJECT: JORDAN AIR DEFENSE -TALK WITH CROWN PRINCE

1. I TALKED AGAIN WITH CROWN PRINCE ABOUT NOON APRIL 29 I TOLD HIM THAT I FELT IT IMPORTANT THAT I CONFIRM AGIN WITH HIM MY IMPRESSION ABOUT WHETHER SAUDIS HAD BEEN REASSURED BY HIM THAT DEAL WAS NOT RPT NOT YET "ABROGATED" (SEE REFTEL) HASSAN CAME BACK IMMEDIATELY SAYING "THAT TO THE BEST OF MY ABILITY I MADE THAT POINT CRYSTAL CLEAR. WHEN I FIRST ARRIVED" HE SAID " SAUDIS WERE BADLY SHAKEN BY THE IMPRESSION THAT KING HAD ABROGATED THE DEAL AND WAS AT THE VERY MOMENT OPENING UP THE SOVIET OPTION" HE CONTINUED THAT AFTER I TOLD THEM THAT NO ABROGATION WOULD OCCUR BEFORE THE DEADLINE APRIL 30 THEY SEEMED GREATLY RELIEVED AND WHEN I LEFT THEM THERE WERE IN EXCELLENT SPIRITS".

2. HASSAN ALSO ADDED THAT AFTER HIS DISCUSSION WITH AMBASSADOR PORTER IN JIDDA HE CALLED FAHD AGAIN FROM MEDINA HE DESCRIBED HIS CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR TO FAHD. HE SAID THAT IT MUST HAVE BEEN THE SAUDIS WHO WANTED HIM TO SEE PORTER SINCE FAHD HAD CALLED HIM EARLIER IN THE DAY URGING THAT HE MEET WITH AMBASSDOR PORTER (I LEFT HIM WITH THAT IMPRESSION) IN THE TELEPHONE CALL FROM MEDINA FAHD WAS URGED BY HASSAN TO MEET WITH PORTER AND HASSAN TOLD FAHD THAT

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IT NOW DEPENDED ON THE GOOD SENSE OF THE TWO KINGS WORKING CLOSELY WI

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THE UNITED STATES TO GET THE DEAL WORKED OUT IN TIME. HASSAN BELIEVES THAT FAHD IS NOW IMPRESSED BY THE URGENCY OF SEEING AMBASSADOR PORTER.

3. HASSAN ASKED ME ABOUT WHEN FAHD WOULD BE SEEING PORTER. AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF VARIOUS CABLES WE HAVE RECEIVED THIS MORNING, I TOLD HASSAN THAT PORTER WOULD WANT TO SEE FAHD AS SOON AS HE COULD. HOWEVER THERE WAS A POSSIBILITY THAT AN ARRANGEMENT TO MEET MIGHT NOT COME UNTIL A FEW DAYS AFTER THE DEADLINE. IN THIS CONVERSATION I WAS EXPLORING WITH WASHINGTON THE POSSIBILITY OF KEEPING THE CONTRACTS ALIVE UNTIL WE COULD GET AN ANSWER FROM FAHD. (I DID THIS BOTH TO LAY THE GROUNDWORK FOR MY LATER APPROACH AND ALSO TO SEE IF HASSAN WOULD RAISE THE "MAY 2 TRIP TO SYRIA PLOY" WHICH HE MENTIONED TO AMBASSADOR PORTER. HE DID NOT MENTION THAT TRIP AND WE ARE NOT AWARE OF A PENDING TRIP TO SYRIA BY THE KING IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS. BUT WE PRESUME THAT THE KING MIGHT START ON THE SOVIET ROUTE BY SEEING DEFINITELY WHAT HE CAN GET FROM OR THROUGH SYRIA)

4. HASSAN REACTED WELL TO THE IDEA OF PROLONGING THE CONTRACT SUSPENSE DATES. I ALSO TOLD HASSAN THAT FAHD PROBABLY WOULD NEED SOME TIME TO GET ALL OF HIS PROPOSAL FOR JORDAN APPROVED. WE ALSO TALKED ABOUT THE KING'S FIXATION WITH THE PHASED OR TRUNCATED APPROACH. I DISTINGUISHED FOR HIM PHASED FUNDING WHICH DID NOT NECESSARILY REQUIRE A TRUNCATED APPROACH FROM CUTTING DOWN THE DEAL AND HE SEEMED TO THINK SUCH MADE SENSE. WHAT THE KING IS IN NEED OF ACCORDING TO HASSAN IS NOT A BIG CHECK NOW BUT SOME ASSURANCE THAT WHEN THE BILLS COME DUE FOR THE SYSTEM THE SAUDIS OR SOMEONE ELSE IS WILLING TO PAY THEM IN ORDER TO AVOID GETTING A TRUNCATED SYSTEM BY DEFAULT AND WASTING A LOT OF TIME IN THE MEANWHILE. FURTHER I TOLD HASSAN THAT THE SECOND PHASE HAD NO FIRM COST FIXED TO IT AND THEREFORE WAS ONLY A SERIES OF ESTIMATES. IN THIS SENSE WE PROBABLY WOULD REQUIRE SOME MORE TIME TO WORK OUT DEFINITELY THOSE COSTS ANYWAY.

5. HASSAN IS OF COURSE THE MOST FAVORABLE OF ALL TO GETTING SOMETHING SECRET

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WORKED OUT. HE ALSO ADVISED FOR ME THAT FAHD SPENT MOST OF HIS TIME TALKING TO HASSAN ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE KING GOING TO THE SOVIETS. HASSAN TAKES THIS NOT AS A SAUDI EFFORT TO TALK THE KING OUT OF SUCH AN IDEA BUT A GENUINE SIGH OF HOW EFFECTIVE WE AND THE KING HAVE BEEN IN MAKING SAUDIS SEE CLEARLY THAT THE KING WOULD GO TO THE SOVIETS IF THE SYSTEM OFFERED FALLS SO FAR BELOW HIS NEEDS AS TO BE UNACCEPTABLE TO HIM. PICKERING

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